

CRAFTSMEN

The word "craft" is a very ancient one, signifying an art, mystery or science, which we as Masons claim to possess and impart in the "work." It meant the knowledge and skill, together with the practical application of the same, by which an artisan carried on his work, which constituted a system of knowledge of a distinctive or peculiar character. The "arts, parts and points" of Masonry consist of a system of science, philosophy and morals, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. It is so far interwoven with religion as to lay us under obligation to pay that rational homage to the Deity which is due from a creature to its Creator. Its foundations lie in teaching man how to live a higher and more perfect life, and nearer the conception of a Christ.

Well-meaning, but improperly instructed Craftsmen, for many generations, have endeavored to turn the Craft aside from its God-given message, and to make of it an institutional organization masonic homes, asylums, endowments and schools have too frequently proven sources of envy, discord and confusion among the Craft. The lesson of the degrees is to teach the individual the benefits of Friendship, charity and brotherly love, so that by his own Self-denial, he may be purified. Institutions are good in their proper sphere, and as society is constituted today, are a necessity. As individuals and as taxpayers, We should support them by every means in our power.

When we take up such work as craftsmen, there is a grave danger that We may thereby make them the keepers of our masonic conscience; washing our hands of our personal responsibility thereby losing the "rights, lights and benefits," which is the real value of the "work" and which we have so earnestly asked for. We must guard the "Craft" against pharisaical and smug respectability, which our crosses, double eagles and crescents tend to foster, and see that the Degree mills turn out something more highly polished and Ornamental than gate-posts. It should be impressed upon the mind of every Initiate, that Masonry is not a mutual benefit organization and that by becoming a craftsman he receives nothing of a "metallic" or pecuniary value. Too often the eastern skies at dawn are murky with clouds and the darkening eve brings a sense of relief. Let no Initiate come within our portals with an untruth upon his lips or in his heart, that so Masonry may not prove to him an apple of Sodom.

-Rob Morris Bulletin

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